



Investing in Lifesaving Medical Research

In dedicating the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Franklin Roosevelt declared: “We cannot be a strong nation unless we are a healthy nation. And we must recruit not only men and women and

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materials but also knowledge and science in the service of national strength.”

Even as war was raging in Europe and Asia and our own country stood at the brink of conflict, President Roosevelt had the foresight and the plain common sense to recognize that an investment in medical research is an investment in national security.

Today, America must once again defend its citizens against a dangerous threat to our freedom and security. Yet even as America leads the fight against terrorism, our nation must remain committed to defeating diseases like cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer’s, and Parkinson’s. As President Bush said earlier this year, “This is a great moment of national challenge, and the work of the NIH has become even more urgent and promising.”

The key to defeating the world’s most deadly and debilitating diseases is research. As a former Navy pilot, I am thankful that Pentagon research has made battle safer for our troops and more dangerous for our enemies. As the brother of four siblings lost to cancer, I also know that NIH research can help protect our loved ones and defeat diseases like cancer.

Every year, cancer and cardiovascular disease – the two leading causes of death in America – cost our nation more than \$486 billion in medical costs and lost productivity. Improved treatments for these and other deadly diseases will reduce health care costs and provide hope to Iowans like Don Schneider of Clinton.

While refereeing a high school basketball game in 1988, Don Schneider felt a shaking in his left hand. Soon after, his family began to notice a blank stare on his face and he began experiencing slowness of movement and neck pain. Don visited his doctor and was diagnosed with Parkinson’s at the age of 35.

In testimony before the Senate subcommittee that funds NIH, which I chair, Don said: “Fifteen years after my diagnosis, Parkinson’s is continuing to slowly but surely chip away at my quality of life. The bottom line is we just don’t know what causes Parkinson’s. But, I am hopeful that we will have answers soon. Scientists have made remarkable progress and with adequate funding could find new treatments and even a cure in my lifetime.”

Don Schneider is right. Medical research is the sole hope we can provide to millions of Americans who will experience disease and disability either in their own lives or in their families. We can care for them in our hospitals and clinics but our ability to alleviate their pain and suffering is limited without cures and preventative treatments. A substantial investment in medical research is the key to finding a cure for killers like Alzheimer’s, heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

That’s why I began an effort five years ago to increase America’s investment in the lifesaving research supported by NIH and conducted at leading research institutions like the University of Iowa and Iowa State. Along with Republican Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, we set the ambitious goal of doubling America’s investment in medical research.

Now, five years later, I am proud to say we’ve achieved our goal. With a record \$3.7 billion increase this year, we will have doubled medical research funding. It’s an investment that will pay off, not only in saving lives, but saving money as well.

The United States proudly leads the international war against disease, and our scientists at the University of Iowa and Iowa State are the generals, lieutenants, and foot soldiers in this effort. Only by continuing to marshal our resources and reaffirming our commitment to NIH research can we defeat the deadly diseases that have plagued our world for so long.